



How to Reduce Theft When Traveling

Checking in

- Be discreet with your belongings. Hide your valuables. Do not make a big display of showing large amounts of cash, jewelry, or laptops to hotel staff or strangers who may be lurking in the lobby.
- Pay with a credit card instead of showing a large amount of cash. The bottom line is that if thieves do not think you have a lot to steal, they are less likely to try to steal from your room.

Use the room safe.

- Even if you are only going to be leaving the room for a short time, store your laptop, jewelry, extra cash, and passports in the safe at all times, and only remove them when you plan to use them. Make a habit of returning valuables directly into the safe as soon as you are done with them, and locking the door. Set the safe's pass code to an unusual number, like your home address number backwards. Potential thieves will quickly try codes such as 1234 and 0000, hoping to get lucky in clearing out your room.

Purchase a diversion safe and use it.

- Diversion safes are "trick" versions of everyday objects, such as shaving cream cans, which have empty interiors in which you can store cash and jewelry. They are inconspicuous objects that are commonly seen in any hotel room, and they have convincing weight to them, in case a would-be thief should pick them up and move them while tidying up the room. Use one or more of these safes and keep them where you would keep the original object, such as a toiletry bag, to hide your money from thieves in a hurry.

Be discreet when you are leaving so housekeeping staff is never sure when the room is empty.

- Do not hang up a door sign indicating that you want the room to be made up. This is a sure sign to thieves that a room is empty. When you leave the room, hang up a "Do Not Disturb" sign and leave the television or radio playing. There will be less chance of a thief entering, looking for an empty room, and you can always call housekeeping later when you return to the room.

Take everything with you that absolutely cannot be replaced.

- If you are traveling out of the country, always keep your passport on your person. Use body wallets or keep these valuable objects in front pockets.

Using Cash

- Keep only enough cash with you for one or two days. Almost all businesses take credit cards. It is a rare vacation spot that does not have an ATM nearby, so getting more cash every day or two is relatively easy. Smaller amounts of cash are less tempting targets for would-be thieves. Follow common-sense safety rules when using these ATMs, such as using the machine in daylight, and making sure that no one is around to see your PIN.